

The Learning Quest [Volume 6, number 1]

August 2011

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The Learning Quest

A Newsletter for New Faculty



Volume 6, Number 1

August 2011

Support for Faculty Professional Development

Points to Ponder

- “Never lose a holy curiosity.”
Albert Einstein
- “The secret of education is respecting the student.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”
John Dewey
- “No matter how good teaching may be, each student must take the responsibility for his own education.”
Carolus

Welcome to Georgia Southern! Whether you’re new to teaching or an experienced professor, moving to a new university can be stressful. The Center for Teaching, Learning and Scholarship (CTLTS) is here to help reduce that stress. According to Alan Altany, the CTLTS Director, “The Center exists to support your professional development as a teacher and scholar who creates significant learning experiences for students. Participation in our programs is voluntary, formative, and intended to be effective, applicable, and enjoyable.”

According to Judith Longfield, who works with new faculty, “The CTLTS goes beyond workshops and seminars. We foster faculty work through Faculty Learning Communities, Reading Roundtables, and regular meetings of new faculty at the First Friday Brown Bags.”

Through these initiatives, and confidential individual consultations, midterm assessments and classroom observations, the CTLTS helps faculty develop and build professional teaching

skills which support increased student learning. Says Longfield, “Investing small amounts of time in learning to be a more effective instructors, results in big payoffs. Not only do new faculty become more effective teachers, they also experience increased job satisfaction and have more time to devote to things like research and service.” For more information about programs and services offered by the CTLTS, visit our website at <http://academics.georgia-southern.edu/ctlts/> or call Alan or Judith at 478-0049.



The CTLTS is located on the ground floor of Henderson Library in Suite 1303. When you enter through the lakeside doors, our offices are on the right-hand side by the stairs.

Inside this issue:

New Faculty Reading Roundtables	2
Faculty Learning Communities	2
MERLOT Inspiration	2
Dr. J's Teaching Tips	3
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning	3
Meet the CTLTS Staff	4
Tomorrow's Professor	4

Lunch & Learn: First Friday Brown Bag Series

Do you have questions about teaching and learning but your new colleagues are too busy to help you find answers? Would you like to meet colleagues from other departments and colleges in a relaxed atmosphere? If you answered “Yes” to either of these questions, plan to attend the First Friday Brown Bag Lunch Series this year. Designed for busy faculty, the

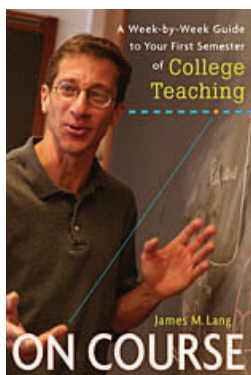
series will meet the first Friday of every month to talk about timely teaching topics, including:

- ♦ Aug. 5 - Getting Ready for the 1st Day - Facilitator: Judith Longfield
- ♦ Sept. 2 - Building Rapport - Facilitator: Janie Wilson, Psychology
- ♦ Oct. 7 - Assessing Students Learning & Your Teaching - Facilitator: Judith Longfield

- ♦ Nov. 4 - Coping with Stress - Facilitator: James Pugh, Psychology
- ♦ Dec. 2 - Writing Your Annual Report - Facilitator: Alan Altany

Bring your lunch and meet your colleagues from 12:15-1:15 p.m. in the CTLTS Break Room, located in Suite 1303 in the Library,

Reservations are not required but are appreciated—478-0049.



This week-by-week guide is practical and easy to read. It provides answers to many of your questions about college teaching.

“It is possible to store the mind with a million facts and still be entirely uneducated.”

Alec Bourne



Not all teaching inspiration is found in a glass—MERLOT is available on the Internet!

Join Reading Roundtable for New(er) Faculty

If you have not yet joined the Reading Roundtable for new(er) faculty—a book discussion group—there’s still time. This semester’s selection is *On Course: A Week-by-Week Guide to Your First Semester of College Teaching* by James Lang from Harvard University Press. Reading Roundtables set their own schedules and meeting times, and the CTLS provides each member with a free book. Here’s what one review said about this semester’s book:

“*On Course* is full of experience-tested, research-based advice. . . . How do you balance lectures with group assignments or discussions—and how do you get a dialogue going when the students won’t participate? What grading system is fairest and most efficient for your class? Should you post lecture notes on a website? How do you prevent cheating, and what do you do if it occurs? How can you help the student with serious personal problems without becoming overly involved? . . . Packed with anecdotes and concrete suggestions, this book will keep both inexperienced and veteran teachers on

course as they navigate the calms and storms of classroom life.”

For more information about the New Faculty Reading Roundtable, contact Dr. Judith Longfield at 478.0078 before August 24.

If this book doesn’t interest you, perhaps one of the other Reading Roundtable selections such as *How Learning Works* or *Academically Adrift* would. To access the fall semester selections go to: <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ctls/Activities/rts.html>.

Faculty Learning Communities at Southern

The first Faculty Learning Community (FLC) at Georgia Southern was formed in 2006. The response of faculty to this peer-based experience of faculty development and inquiry has been very good, largely due to its many personal benefits.

“Faculty benefits include diminished isolation, a shared purpose and cooperation among faculty colleagues, increased curricular integration, a fresh approach to one’s discipline, and increased satisfaction with their students’ learning.” (Lenning & Ebberts)

What is a Learning Community?

A FLC is usually composed of 6 - 12 faculty who are committed to a collegial approach of learning about a topic of common interest. Once a FLC is formed, members set their own meeting schedule and select a facilitator. Each FLC determines its own goals and objectives. It also decides how it will disseminate the results of its research, application and work to other Georgia Southern faculty. Membership in a FLC is for the entire academic year. FLCs currently

forming include: Teaching Critical Thinking, Teaching Large Classes, Scholarship of Teaching & Learning, Brain & Students’ Learning, International Faculty, Effective Learning in STEM Disciplines, and Basics of Qualitative Research. To register for an FLC, visit <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ctls/Activities/flcs.html> and scroll down to the bottom of the page.

Could You Use Some MERLOT Inspiration?

While planning for the next day’s class at 11:45 p.m., do you sometimes find yourself looking for teaching ideas? Instead of grabbing a glass of wine for inspiration, visit MERLOT online. This free and open collection of resources was created

primarily for higher education as a way for faculty from around the world to share their learning materials and pedagogical practices.

According to their website, “MERLOT is a leading edge, user-centered, collection of peer reviewed higher education,

online learning materials, catalogued by registered members and a set of faculty development support services.” So put down your glass of inspiration and visit MERLOT at <http://www.merlot.org/>.

Look for Teaching Tips from Dr. J

Need some advice on teaching? As a new faculty member at Georgia Southern, this year you will receive weekly **Teaching Tips** provided by Dr. Judith Longfield, known to her students as “Dr. J.” Topics covered include such things as Getting Off to a Good Start, 101 Things First Three Weeks, Ten Teaching Mistakes, Dealing with Disruptive

Students, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Writing Good Test Questions, Cheating, Setting Boundaries, Explaining Collaborative-Based Assignments, Breaking the 15-Minute Barrier, Interpreting Student Rating Results and many more.

Judith is the coordinator of the CTLS’s support for faculty who are new, or relatively new, to

college teaching. With more than four decades of classroom experience, she’s probably had the same problem you’re having and has found a timely and practical solution. To talk to “Dr. J” about a teaching issue, simply schedule a consultation at a time convenient to you. Judith can be reached at 478.0078 or jlongfield@georgiasouthern.edu.



Judith Longfield works with new faculty, answering their questions and providing suggestions on surviving and thriving in the academy.

Foundation for Faculty Development: Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

The CTLS emphasizes the importance of the **Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL)** and its goals of student learning, improved teaching effectiveness, faculty development and the creation of a deeply collegial community of and for teaching and learning. SoTL is not simply individuals engaged in pedagogical research that is made public and reviewed. It also has an attitude of questioning and inquiry about any aspect of the teaching-learning process, a curiosity about the results of research on student learning and its implications for one’s own courses and students, a contemplative awareness of who one is as a professor and what it is that one is professing. The **banyan tree** with its ever-spreading canopy and its ever-expanding system of aerial roots is the symbol of the CTLS. SoTL is the ground in which the roots of teaching and learning experiences, experimental

tions, innovations, research, collaboration, and dissemination grow. It is a tree of development that spreads and deepens simultaneously. All the services, presentations, events, resources and projects at the CTLS revolve around the SoTL understanding that teaching is not the purpose of our profession, but rather that teaching is a means to attain the real goal of significant, critical, creative, practical and enduring student learning. SoTL at Georgia Southern includes the *International Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (IJ-SoTL), the SoTL Commons Conference, and the SoTL Expo.

The *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning* (IJ-SoTL) is an open access international journal on the scholarship of teaching and learning which is peer-reviewed with a strong review board of scholars from about 40 countries. It is an international vehicle

for articles, essays, reflections, book reviews, and discussions about SoTL and its applications in higher/tertiary education today. Check out the current issues of IJ-SoTL at: <http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsoTL/>.

SoTL Commons is an international SoTL conference held on the campus of Georgia Southern. On March 7-9, 2012 the CTLS will host the 5th annual SoTL Commons Conference in the Nessmith-Lane building. The conference will bring together faculty engaging in SoTL and anyone wanting to improve student learning outcomes in higher education. The conference epitomizes the notion that college teaching is intellectual work that is enhanced both by disciplinary scholarship and the scholarship of teaching the disciplines. The conference serves as a catalyst for SoTL as an evidence-based way to improve student learning. (Continued on page 4)

“It is what we think we know already that often prevents us from learning.”

Claude Bernard



The banyan tree with its ever-spreading canopy and its ever-expanding system of aerial roots is the symbol of the CTLS.

Meet the CTLS Staff



Dr. Alan Altany is the Director of the CTLS, as well as the editor of the *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning*, the chair of the SoTL Commons Conference, and the founder of the Southeastern SoTL Colloquy. Contact Alan at 478.0049



Patricia Hendrix is the Administrative Manager. She is the “voice” of the CTLS and handles our public relations. She is also the contact person for the Faculty Development Awards and assists faculty and TAs in registering for CTLS events. She can be reached at 478.0049.



Stacy Kluge is the SoTL Commons Conference Coordinator. She is also the person to contact with questions about First Year Experience (FYE), taxonomies of learning, instructional and course design, and the use of instructional technology. Her number is 478. 0068.



Dr. Judith Longfield works with new(er) faculty and TAs. Her areas of expertise include STEM, classroom and program assessment, dealing with disruptive students, teaching and course portfolios, the science of teaching, and SoTL. Call her at 478.0078.

SoTL (cont.)

Attendees typically come from around the U.S. and from other countries. Submission of proposals by Georgia Southern faculty is welcomed. The submission of proposals period is September 1 to October 31, 2011. To submit, go to <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsoil/conference/2012/>.

The **SoTL Expo** is held annually in the spring for the purpose of highlighting SoTL research projects conducted by Georgia Southern faculty. Last year's Expo was held in April and featured poster displays by faculty and TAs. You are invited to visit the Virtual SoTL Expo at <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/cet/VirtualExpo/2011/>.

CTLS Library

Books on pedagogy and teaching are available for checkout from the CTLS Library to encourage reflection, conversations, and research application in teaching-learning. Selections include:

- *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice* by Maryellen Weimer
- *Creating Significant Learning Experiences* by Dee Fink
- *Teaching With Your Mouth Shut* by Donald Finkel
- *Balancing Acts: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Academic Careers* by Mary Taylor Huber
- *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom* by John Bean
- *Engaging the Online Learner: Activities and Resources for Creative Instruction* by Conrad & Donaldson
- *Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning* by Huba & Freed

TOMORROW'S PROFESSORSM

Desktop Faculty Development from Stanford

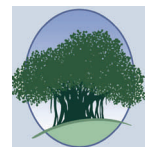
Of interest to new and experienced professors, this free service has 35,000 subscribers in over 100 countries and delivers articles directly to your e-mail. To access these past selections, go to <http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/cgi-bin/tomprof/postings.php> and type the number after each title into the box in the upper left-hand corner.

- Advice for New Faculty - 194
- New Taxonomy of Learning - 274
- Approaches to SoTL - 281
- Assessing Student Learning - 428
- Do Students Understand Your Assignments? - 857
- Developing Persuasive Arguments for Resources - 1094
- Student Intellectual Development - 405
- Habits of Successful Professors - 457
- Rethinking Critical Thinking - 510
- Learning How to Learn - 481

To subscribe, register at <https://mailman.stanford.edu/mailman/listinfo/tomorrows-professor>. An archive of over 1,050 searchable topics is available at <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/CTL/Tomprof/index.shtml#>. Click on the “Search” link on the top, right-hand side and enter a topic of interest to you.

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We're on the Web
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